

Bring Your

Own Bag

Milpitas Switches to Reusable Bags

10¢ per Paper Bag

1. What is the plastic bag ordinance?

On January 1, 2016 all grocery and retail stores are no longer allowed to provide plastic carryout bags at checkout. Retailers may provide a paper bag made of 40% post-consumer recycled content for 10 cents each. Plastic produce bags are excluded from the ban and restaurants may still provide plastic bags for carry-out.

2. How does the ordinance affect me as a consumer?

Start shopping with reusable bags now. Keep reusable bags by your door, in your car, or near your keys. Keep foldable bags in pockets, backpacks, or your purse.

3. Why are bags being prohibited?

Grocery stores and other retailers in the United States annually provide 38 billion single-use paper and plastic carryout bags to their customers. While some of the bags are recycled, many more are disposed of as trash and also find their way into creeks, rivers, oceans and highways as unsightly and harmful litter.

4. Are plastic bags a problem for local creeks?

In Milpitas, Coyote Creek was declared 'impaired by trash' and thereby in violation of the federal Clean Water Act. Tularcitos Creek and Los Coches Creek have considerable amounts of litter. Milpitas and other Bay Area cities are required to reduce litter in waterways in order to comply with state and federal regulations. Plastic bags are one source of plastic litter with a simple alternative – a reusable bag.

5. Why is there a charge on paper bags?

Banning plastic bags alone has the direct effect of encouraging the use of reusable and paper bags. Paper bags are not necessarily better, they require much more energy and water to produce. Even paper bags with recycled content require the cutting of trees for manufacture.

6. Which stores does the ordinance affect?

All grocery and retail stores, large and small, have to comply with the ordinance.

7. Why not just offer customers an incentive to bring their own bags?

Some grocery stores offer incentives, but these programs have not significantly reduced the number of plastic bags consumed.

8. Why not just encourage customers to recycle their plastic bags?

California law currently requires all large stores to provide in-store opportunities for plastic bag recycling. However, only a small fraction of plastic bags are recycled. Many more end up in landfills.

9. Does Milpitas accept plastic bags for recycling at curbside?

Yes. You can recycle plastic grocery bags by placing them in another plastic bag and tying them at the top.

10. Why not require biodegradable plastic bags?

Biodegradable plastic bags still encourage the use of disposable bags.

11. Will I still be able to purchase plastic garbage bags?

Yes. This ordinance does not affect the sale and purchase of plastic garbage bag liners.

Receive a free reusable bag!
Call the City of Milpitas Reuse Line at
(408) 586-2680 and leave your name and full
address. Please allow two weeks for delivery.
One per Milpitas household.

